

RETAIL PRICES - SEPTEMBER QUARTER, 1949.

All Items - "C" Series.

Index numbers of retail prices of all items ("C" Series) - with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1000 - for the September quarter, 1949, with figures for June quarter, 1949, for comparison (in brackets), were:- Brisbane, 1364 (1338); Toowoomba, 1377 (1349); Rockhampton, 1373 (1349); Townsville, 1418 (1397); Bundaberg, 1352 (1327); and Warwick, 1371 (1339).

The rise in retail prices as measured by the "C" Series index was not as great in the September quarter of 1949 as in the preceding quarter. In all Queensland towns, however, prices rose by more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., the greatest increase being 2.4 per cent. in Warwick.

In Brisbane, the increase was 1.9 per cent., compared with the record post-war increase of 3.3 per cent. in the June quarter, 1949. The increase for the twelve months ended September, 1949, was 9.0 per cent., which was a little less than the rise in the preceding twelve months (10.1 per cent.), principally on account of a very small increase of 0.3 per cent. being recorded in the March quarter of 1949, when retailers' margins on clothing, etc., were reduced.

The smaller rise in the "C" Series index in Brisbane in the September quarter was mainly due to no increase having occurred in the average price of food and groceries during the quarter. This is the first occasion since the June quarter of 1947 when food and grocery prices have not shown an upward movement, the increase having reached nearly 6 per cent. in three months at the beginning and end of 1948, with increases of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in the two middle quarters of that year. The rise of 4.5 per cent. in clothing and footwear prices in the recent quarter, though lower than the rise of 7.7 per cent. in the June quarter of 1949, was otherwise the largest quarterly increase recorded in these items since the June quarter of 1941. Prices of miscellaneous items (household drapery, hardware, fuel, light, etc.) also made a substantial increase during the quarter, the rise of 2.3 per cent. being substantially contributed to by a lift in electricity charges and tram fares.

The indexes show the following percentage increases when compared with those for the periods shown.

Retail Price Index, "C" Series, Percentage Increases, September Quarter, 1949.

City.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From September Quarter, 1948.	From June Quarter, 1949.
Brisbane ..	58.1	9.0	1.9
Toowoomba ..	61.8	9.3	2.1
Rockhampton ..	59.5	9.1	1.8
Townsville ..	55.5	9.1	1.5
Bundaberg ..	60.8	8.9	1.9
Warwick ..	66.8	9.8	2.4

Food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and the miscellaneous group of items comprising household drapery and hardware, fuel, light, fares, etc., have shown the following percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases^a, September Quarter, 1949.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1949.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1949.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1949.
Brisbane ..	55.3	0.0	142.5	4.5	37.7	2.3
Toowoomba	67.0	0.0	141.4	5.5	34.5	2.3
Rockhampton	53.4	-0.2	138.9	4.6	40.7	2.0
Townsville	50.5	-0.2	140.1	4.1	38.9	1.3
Bundaberg ..	53.0	-0.6	140.5	3.8	36.8	4.5
Warwick ..	61.5	0.4	146.3	4.7	38.4	4.1

^a Minus (-) indicates decrease.

Food and Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses).

Except for very slight fluctuations in a few items, food prices in Brisbane and Toowoomba remained stationary during the September quarter, the net result being to leave the index unchanged. In Warwick there was a small rise in the combined food and groceries index (0.4 per cent.) due to slight rises in raisins, currants, onions, bacon, and mutton. Slight decreases in the food and groceries index in Rockhampton and Townsville (0.2 per cent.) and Bundaberg (0.6 per cent.) were due to marked decreases in the price of eggs.

The rent index increased in Bundaberg by 0.9 per cent., in Brisbane by 0.2 per cent., and in Rockhampton by 0.1 per cent., but remained stationary in the other three cities.

Clothing, Footwear, and Miscellaneous Items.

The clothing and footwear prices index increased in all six cities by percentages ranging from 3.8 in Bundaberg to 5.5 in Toowoomba.

The miscellaneous items index also rose during the quarter in all six cities, the increases ranging from 1.3 per cent. in Townsville to 4.5 per cent. in Bundaberg. These increases were due to a general rise in fares, and increases in gas and electricity in Bundaberg, gas in Warwick, and electricity in Brisbane.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in September quarter, 1949, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.			Miscellaneous Items.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Toowoomba ..	1	0	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	2 $\frac{3}{4}$	19	11	1	0	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	
Rockhampton ..	1	0	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	8	18	2 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	1	1	0	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	
Townsville ..	1	0	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	19	11 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	0 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	1	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	
Bundaberg ..	19	10	1	0	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	15	11	1	0	1	1	0	8 $\frac{1}{2}$		
Warwick ..	1	0	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	17	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	2 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	1	2	

There was little change during the quarter in the relativities of the various cities with respect to Brisbane for the cost of all items together. Townsville remained the city with the highest prices, but the excess of 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in each £1 in its prices over those of Brisbane in the previous quarter dropped to 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the September quarter. The greatest relative change in food and grocery prices was in Bundaberg, where the average price of these items came closer to Brisbane prices, an excess of 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the £1 being reduced to 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Townsville was the most expensive city for food and groceries, and the 1s. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. required there for every £1 spent in Brisbane on those items was the principal factor contributing to Townsville's high average level of all prices. In clothing and footwear, there is only a very small margin between Brisbane prices and those of any provincial city. Toowoomba, in which in the June quarter there was a saving of 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the £1 over Brisbane clothing and footwear prices, experienced a rise in the recent quarter so that the saving was reduced to 1d. In prices of miscellaneous items, Townsville showed a relative fall in the recent quarter, and was replaced by Warwick as the city with the highest price level for this group of items. In the latter city, £1 worth of miscellaneous items (at Brisbane prices) cost £1 0s. 10d. in the June quarter, but the amount rose to £1 1s. 2d. in the September quarter.

Basic Wage Rates in State Capital Cities.

The following table shows, for the September quarter of 1949, the retail price index number ("C" Series) for each of the six capital cities and the prevailing basic wage rates for males prescribed by Commonwealth and State industrial tribunals. The fourth column shows the amounts which would have been required in Brisbane to provide a standard of living equivalent to that provided by each State basic wage in its own capital city. The differences between these amounts and the State basic wage for Brisbane, which are given in the last column, show the margin of advantage in real purchasing power provided by the Queensland basic wage over each of the other State basic wages, according to price levels and wages prevailing at the middle of August, 1949.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates, September Quarter, 1949.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series) 3rd Quarter, 1949.	Commonwealth Court Basic Wage for Males at 15.8.49.	State Court Basic Wage for Males at 15.8.49.	Equivalent at Brisbane Prices of Each State Basic Wage.	Margin of Purchasing Power in Favour of Brisbane State Basic Wage.
Brisbane ..	1364	£ 6 s. 2 d. 0	£ 6 s. 6 d. 0	£ 6 s. 6 d. 0	s. d. -
Sydney ..	1452	6 10 0	6 10 0	6 2 1	3 11
Melbourne ..	1422	6 8 0	6 8 0	6 2 9	3 3
Adelaide ..	1408	6 4 0	6 5 0	6 1 1	4 11
Perth ..	1435	6 6 0	6 13 2	6 6 7	-0 7
Hobart ..	1425	6 7 0	6 7 0	6 1 7	4 5

Following the publication of the index numbers shown in the above table, the basic wage of the Commonwealth Court was automatically adjusted from 1st November, 1949. The new rates and the amounts of adjustments are shown below, together with the latest basic wage rates for males and females declared by the various State industrial authorities, and the dates from which they operated.

Basic Wage Rates, December Quarter, 1949.

Capital City.	Commonwealth Basic Wage.			State Basic Wage.			Date of Operation.
	Amount. ^a	Increase on Previous Quarter.	Males.	Females.			
Brisbane ..	£ 6 s. 5 d. 0	s. 3 0	£ 6 s. 9 d. 0	£ 3 s. 19 d. 6	31. 10. 49.		
Sydney ..	6 12 0	2 0	6 12 0	3 11 6	1. 11. 49		
Melbourne ..	6 10 0	2 0	(6 10 0)	(3 10 0)	(1. 11. 49)		
Adelaide ..	6 6 0	2 0	6 5 0	3 8 6	19. 5. 49		
Perth ..	6 9 0	3 0	6 15 11	3 13 5	24. 10. 49		
Hobart ..	6 8 0	1 0	(6 8 0)	(3 9 0)	(1. 11. 49)		

^a Rate for males. The female rate is generally 54 per cent. of the male rate.

^b No State wage declared, but rates shown are those of Commonwealth Court which are followed to a large extent.

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BRISBANE.

4th November, 1949.

Table No. 1 - The "All Items" Retail Prices Index - "C" Series.
(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

City.	Year Ended Decr., 1928.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended Sept., 1949.	Quarter Ended -				
				Sept., 1948.	Decr., 1948.	March, 1949.	June, 1949.	Sept., 1949.
Brisbane ..	917	863	1322	1251	1291	1295	1338	1364
Toowoomba ..	906	851	1331	1260	1292	1304	1349	1377
Rockhampton ..	903	861	1330	1259	1290	1307	1349	1373
Townsville ..	1023	912	1377	1300	1335	1356	1397	1418
Bundaberg ..	b	841	1311	1241	1276	1287	1327	1352
Weighted Average Five Towns ^a	915	864	1326	1256	1294	1300	1343	1368
Warwick ..	914	822	1322	1249	1282	1294	1339	1371

^a Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

^b Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September quarter, 1936.

Table No. 2 - Food, Groceries, and Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses) Index - "B" Series.
(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

City.	Year Ended Decr., 1928.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1949.	Year Ended Sept., 1949.	Quarter Ended -				
					Sept., 1948.	Decr., 1948.	March, 1949.	June, 1949.	Sept., 1949.
Brisbane ..	901	852	1117	1135	1074	1116	1130	1146	1147
Toowoomba ..	833	821	1135	1154	1092	1126	1153	1169	1169
Rockhampton ..	858	837	1113	1131	1072	1107	1129	1145	1143
Townsville ..	1047	916	1180	1200	1133	1169	1205	1213	1211
Bundaberg ..	b	799	1082 ^r	1100	1040	1077	1098	1113 ^r	1110
Weighted Average Five Towns ^a	892	851	1121	1139	1078	1118	1136	1151	1151
Warwick ..	841	768	1089 ^r	1109	1047	1080	1103	1124 ^r	1128

^a Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

^b Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September quarter, 1936.

^r Revised since the issue of Bulletin No. 26.

Table No. 3 - Average Retail Prices of Food and Groceries, Brisbane.

Commodity and Unit of Quantity.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Month of -		Commodity and Unit of Quantity.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Month of -	
		June, 1949.	Sept., 1949.			June, 1949.	Sept., 1949.
		d.	d.			d.	d.
Bread ..	2 lb.	5.33	7.50	7.50	Eggs ..	1 doz.	19.69
Flour ..	2 lb.	3.73	5.36	5.36	Milk ..	1 qt.	36.00
Tea ..	1 lb.	26.99	33.00	33.00	Beef -		36.00
Sugar ..	1 lb.	3.98	4.46	4.46	Sirloin Roast 1 lb.	8.73	10.10
Sago ..	1 lb.	3.00	10.30	9.35	Steak, Rump 1 lb.	11.34	10.10
Jam, Plum ..	1½ lb.	8.02	15.59	15.59	Steak, Chuck 1 lb.	5.83	21.55
Oats, Flaked	1 lb.	3.57	4.60	6.00	Rolled Brisket 1 lb.	5.48	10.55
Raisins ..	1 lb.	10.57	16.45	16.89	Mutton -		10.50
Potatoes ..	7 lb.	14.88	23.27	23.14	Leg ..	1 lb.	7.75
Onions ..	1 lb.	2.93	3.64	3.70	Loin Chops 1 lb.	7.78	12.10
Soap ..	1 lb.	6.20	9.91	9.82	Pork -		12.55
Butter ..	1 lb.	19.00	25.91	25.91	Leg ..	1 lb.	11.40
Cheese ..	1 lb.	13.28	17.55	17.59	Chops ..	1 lb.	11.48